

# MEMO

**To: Lanesborough Board of Selectmen**

**From: Pontoosuc Roads and Rights-of-way Committee**

**Ref: Action Priorities/Final Report**     **draft 1/18/14 rbb**

In March, 2012, the Lanesborough Board of Selectmen established this Committee to analyze issues/opportunities and recommend solutions for roads and rights-of-way in neighborhoods on the west/north shores of Pontoosuc Lake--the Wilburs/Pontoosuc West, Dunreaths, and Gunn's Grove Sub-divisions. The Committee held 10 meetings in the last 20 months. Meetings were posted, open to participation by non-members, and a total of 19 individuals attended one or more meetings. Committee members: Bob Barton, Bill Gero, Lee Hauge, Jack Hickey, Ron Tinkham, and Nancy Wituszynsky. Surveyor Pat McColgan advised the committee periodically. Hwy. Supt. Bill Decelles and Town Admins. Joe Kellogg and Paul Sieloff attended several meetings. Bill Gero passed away in December, 2013, and the Committee offers a special farewell in recognition of his dedication to our work. This memo summarizes the Committee's priorities for early Town action and introduces the whole report.

## **Most important issues and opportunities identified:**

- Administrative/leadership vacuum—many issues are long-standing; despite some excellent individual efforts, it's hard to know what the "rules" are, hard to get anything clarified, checked-out or enforced; this has frustrated many residents.
- Lake environmental degradation--storm water/silt run-off.
- Ongoing (decades) violation of state law against the Town plowing/maintaining unaccepted roads without Town Meeting authorization.
- Confusion over who owns the roads and rights-of-way, and who can use them
- Uncertain, sometimes unsafe community access to the lake and recreational activities

**Priority Actions** We list here 10 major priorities costing \$125,000 in next 3 fiscal years, some "capital" expenses. The cost of plowing/improving roads would be in addition to this estimate.

### Administrative:

1. Appoint Town Administrator responsible for Pontoosuc Lake neighborhoods issues AND assuring follow-up on these 10 priorities and the other 15 actions recommended in Reports 1 & 2. TA may delegate to an Exec. Assistant, with BOS approval.
2. Get into compliance with state law—2015 Town Meeting approval Town of plowing/maintaining unaccepted roads, until the town accepts or rejects legal ownership.
3. In 2014, clearly define a "grants coordinator" in town to assure that we don't miss opportunities to seek grants for initiatives proposed here, as well as other town priorities.

### Road maintenance, storm water run-off

4. Create a Comprehensive Technical Plan (CTP) for maintenance of lake area roads
  - In February or March 2014 put out an RFP to engineering firms to ascertain the cost of plan development and to get acquainted with possible eng. contractors.
  - Include in 2015 Budget funds to create the CTP (\$20,000??);
  - Select consultant in summer 2014, and have the CTP finalized by 2/15.

### Road ownership

5. In 2014-2016 Town take ownership of 18 roads (total about 2.5 miles) that are now plowed/maintained by Hwy Dept., but technically unaccepted/private-owned.
  - At Annual Town Mtg. 2014 update the 1945 town By-law on road acceptances.

- Expect survey costs of \$12,000 per year in fiscal 2015 and 2016.
  - Plan increased town legal fees, est. \$5,000 each year.
  - Once the roads are accepted, dovetail the schedule for improving these roads with the town's overall road maintenance schedule, using Chapter 90, town budget allocations, and grant-writing to improve these roads in ways compatible with the CTP. Hit the highest priorities before 2018.
6. In 2015 work with neighborhood/residents to convert to private ownership 6 "paper roads" that have no public use—function now as driveways or side yards.

#### Community use and safety

7. Rights-of-Way--A 1988 Lanesborough By-Law requires rights-of-way always be kept clear for access by emergency vehicles. There are frequent violations resulting in neighborhood tensions and potentially dangerous situations. As stipulated in the by-law, Selectmen should request a "written order" from fire dept. authorizing placement of signs indicating blockage is prohibited. Once signs are in place, Selectmen should direct police to enforce the by-law if/when issues arise. This is a 2014 priority.
8. Parking--Create clearly identified public parking at Town Beach, Narragansett and Bull Hill causeways, and Wampatuck Park. Beach and Causeway parking will require purchase of easements or land. Expect to invest \$50,000 on this priority. 2016 priority.
9. Traffic—
- 2014-15 slow traffic on both causeways with plowable speed humps and signs.
  - By 1/20/14 post on Town website an emergency plan for vehicles to drive out south end of Narragansett Avenue. It is currently blocked by condominium gate and is vital in case of emergency at the Narragansett causeway.
10. Signage—2014-2016 plan/install 20 +/- signs for rights-of-way, safety (fishermen, walkers, swimmers, children), and for directing parking. Expect to spend \$10-15,000.

#### **Report Contents:**

Action Memo  
 Two Maps of lake area roads  
 Working Priorities Timeline  
 R-o-Ws Report  
 Roads Report  
 Roster of roads, incl. recommended changes  
 History of Road Acceptances  
 Minutes of Committee Meetings